

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. - 19. (cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A system for permanently implanting a fastener for reducing regurgitation of a cardiac valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of movable leaflets, the leaflets having a superior surface on a first side and an inferior surface on an opposing side, the system comprising:

a catheter shaft having a proximal end and a distal end; and

a permanently implantable fastener removably connected to the catheter shaft and including

a pair of articulating arms coupled together and forming an angle therebetween, the articulating arms movable from an open position in which portions of the articulating arms are spaced apart with a first angle therebetween, to a closed position in which the portions of the articulating arms are closer together with a second angle therebetween less than the first angle, and to positions between the open position and the closed position, the pair of articulating arms being configured to engage the inferior surfaces of the leaflets;

a control mechanism operatively coupled to the articulating arms and adapted to open and close the pair of articulating arms, wherein the pair of articulating arms can be closed thereby reducing the angle therebetween, to engage the leaflets and thereafter be opened to allow release of the leaflets;

a central member coupled to the pair of articulating arms and removably coupled to the catheter shaft near the distal end, the catheter shaft adapted for delivering the pair of articulating arms into a heart and detaching from the central member once the articulating arms are engaged with the leaflets, the central member and articulating arms being left in the patient's

body while maintaining the leaflets in the coapted configuration after the catheter shaft has been removed from the patient's body; and

a pair of superior elements movably coupled to the ~~central member~~ catheter shaft near the distal end thereof, the superior elements comprising a radially adjustable loop, the loop including an extender element, wherein actuation of the extender element or the catheter shaft radially adjusts the loop and, wherein the pair of superior elements are being configured to engage the superior surfaces of the leaflets, the superior elements cooperating with the articulating arms to capture and pinch the valve leaflets therebetween thereby affixing the fastener to the valve leaflets, and

wherein the pair of articulating arms are moved independently of the pair of superior elements.

21. - 66. (Cancelled)

67. (Currently Amended) A system for permanently implanting a fastener for reducing regurgitation of a cardiac valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of moveable leaflets, the leaflets having a superior surface on a first side and an inferior surface on an opposing side, the system comprising:

a flexible shaft having a proximal end and a distal end; and

a permanently implantable fastener releasably connected to the flexible shaft and including

a pair of articulating arms coupled together near the distal end of the flexible shaft, forming an angle therebetween and being moveable from an open position in which portions of the articulating arms are spaced apart at a first angle, to a closed position in which the portions of the pair of articulating arms are closer together at a second angle less than the first angle and to positions therebetween, the pair of articulating arms being configured to engage the inferior surfaces of the leaflets and hold the leaflets in a coapted configuration in which portions of the superior surfaces are facing each other;

a control mechanism operatively coupled to the articulating arms and adapted to open and close the pair of articulating arms so as to vary the angle; and

a pair of superior elements movably coupled together and operably connected to the pair of articulating arms, the superior elements comprising a radially adjustable loop, the loop including an extender element, wherein actuation of the extender element or the flexible shaft radially adjusts the loop, and wherein the pair of superior elements are configured to engage the superior surfaces whereby the leaflets may be engaged between the articulating arms and the superior elements,

wherein the pair of articulating arms and superior elements are moved independently of one another and can be closed to engage the leaflets and thereafter be opened to allow release and recapture of the leaflets prior to disconnection of the fastener from the flexible shaft, the pair of articulating arms and superior elements maintaining the leaflets in the coapted configuration once the fastener has been disconnected from the flexible shaft and the flexible shaft has been removed from the patient's body.

68. - 71. (Cancelled)

72. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 20, wherein the central member is configured to be positioned through the valve between the leaflets.

73. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 20, wherein the superior elements are coupled to a conduit slidably coupled to the central member.

74. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 20, wherein the pair of articulating arms have engaging surfaces for engaging the surfaces of the leaflets.

75. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 74, wherein the engaging surfaces have a texture or teeth for enhancing friction.

76. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 20, wherein the catheter shaft is flexible and configured for positioning through a blood vessel into the heart.

77. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 76, wherein the pair of articulating arms and central member are slidably positionable through an endovascular sheath.

78. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the pair of articulating arms have engaging surfaces for engaging the surfaces of the leaflets.

79. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 78, wherein the pair of articulating arms engages the surfaces of the leaflets without penetration thereof.

80. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 78, wherein the engaging surfaces have a texture or teeth for enhancing friction.

81. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the pair of articulating arms and the superior elements are slidably positionable through an endovascular sheath.

82. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the pair of articulating arms and the superior elements are slidably positionable through a blood vessel into a heart.

83. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the control mechanism is adapted to open and close each articulating arm of the pair of articulating arms independently.

84. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the control mechanism is adapted to open and close the pair of articulating arms in tandem.

85. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 67, wherein the superior elements are resiliently biased.